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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Thursday, October 17, 1940.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "TEXTILE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Fall furnishing is in the air. Our mailbag today reflects a strong interest in making things for the house- slip covers and cotton comforters. So again I've called upon the Bureau of Home Economics to supply the answers to our letter writers.

First, the slip covers. A slip cover is often economical when there's need of dressing up furniture a little without spending much. And here's a problem encountered by a woman who has already started on her slip covers.

"Where do you put the placket in a slip cover for an upholstered chair? My daughter puts hers right in the middle of the back. She thinks it's easier. But if the chair is out from the wall the placket and fastenings show.

"Also, how long should the opening be? Does the sliding fastener run down the flounce? And where do you put the sliding fastener on the cushion?"

First, Mrs. Morrison of the Bureau of Home Economics says the way you close the placket makes no difference in where it is placed. She prefers to make the placket in one of the corner seams at the back of the chair. It's no harder, really, than splitting the material in the center back, and the opening scarcely shows. Mrs. Morrison also says that 24 inches is a long enough opening for most chairs. If you use a sliding fastener you can stop it at the top of the valance. The ruffle has enough fullness to prevent gapping, anyway.

Another suggestion for the placket, if you can't match your material in a sliding fastener: You can use snap tape all the way down if you like. This tape comes by the yard and saves sewing separate snaps on by hand.

Now for the placket in the cushion cover. Make it long enough to extend a few inches around the two ends at the back of the cushion. Cut two pieces of material the desired length. Put a sliding fastener between the two strips or make a regular placket and use snaps to close it. The finished piece should be as wide as the boxing. Join this section with the placket in it to the rest of the boxing strip and sew to the top and bottom parts of the cushion.

The next inquiry is about making a slip cover for a "barrel back" chair. In this type of chair the back is padded, but the padding is divided into 7 or 8 vertical ridges running down the back. This writer asks "How can I make a slip cover to fit such a shape?"

Don't try to fit it, Mrs. Morrison advises. Just cover it. Make the back of your slip cover plain, even though you have to hide the interesting barrel back. Very expert professional slip-cover makers sometimes take small pintucks up and down the back section on the wrong side of the slip cover, and then push these tucks in between the ridges. But after people have sat in the chair a few times, these tucks pull out. If the curved shape of the chair back requires it, you could fit your chair by taking darts in the material. Spread the material over the back of the chair and pin the darts in on the wrong side of the cloth, making the stitching lines follow the crevices in the back of the chair. The seams then carry out the lines in the upholstery. In a definitely patterned fabric so many seams may be objectionable, so select a plain or small-patterned material for this type of slip cover.

Here's a letter about making a comforter, or "comfortable", as many people call them. "Please tell me if I could make an outside cover for a cotton comforter,- one that I can take off and wash without washing the padding?"

Yes, indeed, Mrs. Morrison says, it's a very good idea to make an inner covering of cheesecloth or some other thin material for your cotton batts. And she

suggests a washable outside cover of lawn or some other pretty, thin, washable material. You'll need about 10-1/2 yards of each material. Cut the cheesecloth into 4 equal strips. Sew 2 of these together for the upper and 2 for the under side of the padding, and press the seams open. Turn these seams inside the padding, next to the cotton. Fasten the sheet for the underside into a quilting frame or lay it out flat on an improvised table made with boards and saw horses. Arrange the cotton batts on the cheesecloth, leaving from one to one and a half inches on all sides for finishing. If two or more layers of batts are used, it is best to split one lengthwise and put a half on each side. This distributes the edges and makes the comforter uniform in thickness.

Now spread the top sheet of cheesecloth over the cotton. Pin it in place and with short basting stitches quilt all three layers both lengthwise and crosswise. Space the rows about six inches apart. This holds the cotton in small pockets and keeps it from bunching up. Trim off all but half an inch on the sides for seams. Turn in these edges and sew them together with short running stitches.

Since the outer cover is removable, make it like a slip. Cut the lawn or whatever material you are using into 4 strips as you did the cheesecloth, and sew 2 of them together for the upper part of the cover, and 2 for the under. Fit the two sheets of the cover on the padding and seam them up on three sides. Slip the paddin inside, close the fourth edge by hand, and fasten the corners only to the padding.

The warmth of the comforter depends on how much cotton you used in the filling, and how fluffy it is. That is, how much air is enclosed in the cotton batting. To make the padding extra fluffy, try beating the cheesecloth filling lightly with two sticks, before you quilt it. Use short, light strokes, as in making a mattress.

If you wish, you can substitute wool batts for the cotton batts. The wool is more expensive but it makes a warmer bed covering.

That's the last of today's batch of questions on making slip covers and comforters. Next week we'll have some more questions asked by homemakers.